

The title for today's message is: **Love According To Christ Jesus**

Jesus said: **A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.**

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ Amen.

There's a lot of talk in our world today about the topics of love. You'll even hear those words used quite a bit by a lot of preachers in a lot of different churches.

In fact, Jesus Himself in today's Gospel reading gives us a commandment to "love one another as I have loved you."

On the surface, it seems simple. Yet, at the same time, this is one passage that, when misunderstood, can lead to all kinds of problems.

So this morning, let's get into our text to understand the topics of love and glory, according to Jesus Christ.

Jesus is telling His disciples, and you and me today, in our Gospel reading ***"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."***

Just in those two verses alone, Jesus uses the word "love" 4 times. It's a short word, 4 letters long, it's a word that many of us use on a daily basis.

It sounds simple: "love others as I have loved you." And yet, that phrase has been abused quite frequently.

That's because when we hear that word "love", we start to think of love in

Think about what our world today considers “love”. For starters, love is a pretty vague word, isn’t it? It can cover so many types of relationships.

We often use it to describe our feelings toward our spouses, our children, our friends, our church, our community, or even our favorite foods.

You have to listen to the context to understand what kind of “love” is being talked about.

For example, most people are going to understand that your love for your spouse is going to be a different kind of love than you have for your favorite food, *at least we hope that’s the case.*

But not only that, your love for your spouse is probably going to differ from the love you have for your children, or your parents, or your friends.

The other thing we have to remember about love when it comes to our relationships with other people is that the world has it’s own idea of what is and is not considered **“loving.”**

If you want the world’s definition of love, listen to a lot of the so called popular music today.

There’s a lot being said about love in a lot of those songs. In fact, Tina Turner had a hit song asking the question *“What’s Love Got to Do With It?”*

Movies and television have something to say about love too, along with those paperback romance novels and all kinds of books and other media.

And what are all of those things saying about love? Our world is defining love as being a self serving kind of love.

“Love is true when it suits you, this would probably be a nice catchy ad slogan.” Our world looks at love as satisfying one’s own needs and desires.

Through having someone else serve them and give them some sort of emotional “high” if you will.

And it’s great for a while. Yes you feel great, everything seems to smell like roses, nothing can ever seem to go wrong.

That’s what all of that stuff out in the world tells us about love. How many movies or books end with the couple madly in love with each other.

And then riding off into the sunset to “live happily ever after” without having to endure any hardships that will test their “love” for each other?

So with this definition of love, what happens when that person you claim to “love” no longer suits your needs?

Or when you find someone else who you think might be a better “fit” and you think you love that person instead?

Why you can just put that other love aside, because if it’s not suiting your needs or wants anymore or that person needs more of your time and energy.

Then you can just exchange that love for something that suits your new passions better.

Love according to the world is also used as leverage to try to get what we want out of other people.

How many times have we heard the phrase *“If you really love me, you’ll do this or that.”* It’s certainly a very conditional type of love.

And what happens when our conditions aren’t being met? The world encourages us to just terminate that “love” and move on to someone else.

It's a kind of love that leaves a lot of broken people in its path. Now if that's the kind of love that Jesus is telling us to have for one another, we're going to have a pretty serious problem on our hands, aren't we?

But you see, Jesus' definition of love doesn't depend on us and how we sinful human beings treat each other.

No! Jesus tells us ***“love one another as I have loved you.”*** How has Jesus loved us? Well, let's look to when He says these words.

Today's Gospel reading takes place in the upper room on Maundy Thursday night. That's right, Jesus just shared the Passover meal with His disciples.

After they ate He's washed their feet, showing His humility in serving them. Here Judas revealed Himself as the betrayer, and has now left the room.

The clock has begun and the Passion of our Lord is underway. It will only be a matter of hours before Judas returns, with a group of soldiers in tow.

Jesus is arrested whipped, beaten, mocked, and spit upon and soon sentenced to death where He's forced to carry His own cross.

To His own execution out of the city walls and up the hill called Golgotha, meaning the place of the skull.

And why does He do all of this? Is it for Himself? No. It's for His disciples, and It's for you and me here today.

It's how He shows His great love for us by taking our place and suffering the punishment for our own sins.

This is what the Greeks would call “Agape Love”, an unconditional love. A love that says *“I'm going to love that person anyway, no matter what it costs me.”*

He had spent the last three years of His life teaching His disciples, and anyone who would hear, telling them to stop sinning and repent.

And for those who were truly repentant, Jesus had such love for them that He was going to suffer and die for them so that they could be forgiven.

As well as set free from their own sin to love God and others, just as they had first been loved by Christ.

And the strange thing is, as this reading began, you'll recall Jesus said that: ***“Now the Son of Man has been glorified and God has been glorified in Him. If God has been glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself and will glorify Him at once.”***

And what's about to unfold here isn't glorious in the eyes of the world. No! It's far from it.

When the world looks at the sight of a bloodied, beaten Jesus hanging on a cross, it won't look like there's much glory there.

It won't look like a loving picture. Yet, though hidden, the reality behind this is the most glorious, loving picture ever recorded in human history.

Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, allowing Himself to suffer and die in place of sinners so that sinners can be forgiven and set free from the bondage of sin.

In a way, it's appropriate that this discussion happens just after Jesus institutes the Sacrament of Holy Communion that Maundy Thursday.

That night, He gives the people a new supper, a way to give to His disciples a very real, personal reminder of His love for them.

He said: “Take, eat, this is my body. Take, drink, this is my blood, given and shed for you, for the forgiveness of all your sins, yes all of your sins.”

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“Take, eat, this is my body. Take, drink, this is my blood, given and shed for you for the forgiveness of all of your sins.”

In a few moments this morning, you are going to hear those same words spoken to you at this altar.

Although in the eyes of the world, what is going to take place here will seem rather ordinary. But we know that our savior is right here in the bread and wine

Jesus says to us all, My love for you is unconditional. For those of you who are hurting, wondering if anyone could love you, Jesus does, He died for you and me.

I've risen for you. And I'm forgiving you all of your sins.” And you and I, the people of God here at Christ the King.

Look when we leave here today, we leave here with a charge in our daily lives: ***“Love one another just as Christ has loved you.”***

That means whoever should come into your life this week, “whoever”, you should love them as Christ loves you.

It means that anyone who walks through the doors of our churches is a person whom Christ has died for.

For the times where we haven't always loved others, whether it's here in our church, or our families, with the unconditional love of Christ He still loves us.

That we point them to the cross, where there is a Savior who with arms stretched out wide, says “this is how much I love you.”

Now one part of showing people the love of Christ is by telling them to stay away from all sin, especially sin that threatens to destroy lives and leave people used, lonely, and hurting.

Look, there are many out there who say, it’s unloving to talk about sin and to encourage those who are caught up in it, to confess it, and to leave it.

Think of it this way. If you see a young child walking over to a hot burner on a stove, what would you do?

Are you going to warn that child not to touch it because if they do, they’ll be burned? Or, would you keep quiet and allow that child to touch it?

It would not be a loving thing to allow that child to touch that burner because we don’t want the child to fuss over being told “no” right?

It’s the same way when we warn people to stay away from sin that threatens to leave them bound, broken and lost.

Sure they may put up a fuss at first, but we warn them, not out of hate, but out of a spirit of love, hoping they will avoid being burned.

Just as Christ during His ministry and through His Word today, warns us to stay away from sin.

And for those who have been burned in the past, who bear the scars of their past sins, we lovingly point them to Christ, and showing His love for us.

We too forgive them, we love them, and we welcome them into our midst, just as God does for us. We point them to the cross.

We join them at this altar, where our Savior reminds us of His love again and again. But it’s not just for “those people”. No! It’s for you and me too.

For the times where we haven't always loved others, whether it's here in our church, or our families, with the unconditional love that Christ has for us, be assured, He still loves us.

For the times we haven't always loved others with the unconditional love that Christ has for us, whether here at church or in our families, rest assured, He still loves us.

He still forgives us, cleanses us, and mends our broken hearts. He still comes to us today through humble means of Word and Sacrament.

Christ's great love for us and the world, and the way He goes about declaring it to us.

Is not going to look glorious in the eyes of the world. It's not going to feel like the "love" that our world wants us to believe will fulfill our lives.

But the love that Christ has for us, His unconditional love, his self-sacrificial love, is a love beyond anything we can ever have for anyone.

It's a love that mends broken hearts. It's a love that makes those who are "unlovable" in the eyes of the world into the most beloved in the eyes of Christ.

It's the love that Christ has for you, and for me. Thanks be to God that He loves us that much, and that He calls us out to share that love with others.

Amen!